

Tree-Removal Specialists Tackle Dangerous Jobs

Owners of tree care businesses must find skilled workers and reliable equipment for high-in-the-sky work.

Tree removal can prevent major problems for property owners, but it can be expensive. Removing large trees often requires a crane, a crew of five workers, tree chippers and other heavy equipment. One recent project in Midtown Atlanta required the use of a 150-foot crane, a fearless worker perched high in a tree (pictured in the center of the following photo), the crane operator, and two workers who operated the wood chipper. Total cost to remove the tree was "about \$10,000," according to the project foreman.



This tree didn't appear to be dead or unhealthy. The homeowners wanted it removed to prevent it from crashing into their home should it be hit by lightning, or topple over because of rain-soaked soil and a top-heavy tree.

\$10,000 sounds like a lot of money for the homeowner to spend for a single project. But when compared with the expense and disruption the homeowners would face when (not "if") the tree finally succumbs to old age or unstable soil a storm's fury, it seems a reasonable price to pay.

\$10,000 also seems reasonable considering the costs incurred by the tree specialist to get the job done. He (or, increasingly, she) pays the crew; buys liability and vehicle insurance policies; employs office personnel; pays office expenses; rents or buys the crane and other heavy equipment; and buys advertising and marketing to attract new customers. Look at it that way, and \$10,000 doesn't seem like such a large sum.



The crane operator hoisted huge limbs toward a guy in a truck operating some huge claw like equipment. Smaller limbs went into a wood chipper. Big operation, six workers, six or seven major pieces of equipment.

Another recent tree job in Atlanta yielded the most amazing mass of trunk and limbs and branches imaginable. The "back story" on this job must have been impressive: the angst the homeowners felt in deciding it was time to take it down (trees are often beloved in Atlanta ... and also feared); the time it took to interview tree-removal specialists; the sheer magnitude of the project; the fear of something going awry and the prospect of a huge limb cascading through the roof, and – yes – the dent in the bank account.



Atlanta is known for its trees. The long growing season, from March through October, produces monstrous beauties. Most tree specialists in the area are facing a backlog of projects because of record rains in spring and early summer.

The next time they need a tree specialist (or a stone mason or other skilled contractor) to remove massive trees, work on a major installation, or repair complex structures or systems -- and they balk at the cost -- they should think twice. They'll spend time finding someone to do it for less (and their time IS money), and then if they use the "do it for less" operator, they might find that that operator cuts corners. Maybe the equipment is not well maintained, maybe the contractor carries no insurance, maybe the contractor doesn't devote resources to after-job clean-up. The more they ask tree service operators to cut their price, the more likely it is that contractors will cut corners and expose homeowners to unnecessary risk.

| Profile America's Quick-Learn Report ([QLR](#)) on the tree care industry is available for \$69.99 on www.profileamerica.biz. Profile America's QLR capsulizes industry trends and includes top-line findings from "green industry" research firms, trade associations, general business journals, and government data.

Industry analysis is also available from Tree Care Industry Association and its publication, Tree Care Industry Magazine, www.treecareindustry.org; Landscape Management magazine, www.landscapemanagement.net; Lawn & Landscape Magazine, www.lawnandlandscape.com; Irrigation & Green Industry magazine, www.igin.com.

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